

## Sociology Department on Campus Carry

We, the undersigned faculty of the Department of Sociology, wish to express our objection to the campus-carry legislation set to take effect in August of next year. We believe that the policy is inconsistent with the core mission of the university – the free and unfettered exchange of ideas – and that it is not supportable by empirical social-scientific evidence. Our faculty includes several nationally-recognized authorities in criminology and criminal justice who have been active in national public policy for many years. None of them believes that the campus-carry policy will make our campus safer, or that it is sound public policy informed by empirical research. Most members of the American Society of Criminology – the national professional organization of criminologists – would agree that more guns at UT does not mean more safety (see the roster of members on the ASC website).

One of our members recently encountered a large sign on the entrance to an Austin-area medical clinic. It read as follows: “Pursuant to section 30.06 penal code (trespass by holder of license to carry a concealed handgun), A person licensed under subchapter H, chapter 411, government code (concealed handgun law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.” It seems to us that the reasons it would be unwise to carry weapons into a medical clinic apply with equal force to a college campus, where there are thousands of young people with still-developing minds. College campuses, in fact, are among the safer environments to be found in the United States. There are occasional, well-publicized murders or mass murders on campuses, but as hazards, they are statistically rare events. It makes little sense to jeopardize what are among the most respected institutions in our society (indeed, in the world). Implementing this legislation would not result in an immediate rash of shootings on campus. For one thing, there are already guns on campus. But by encouraging more, perhaps many more, firearms on campus, the legislation will create a risk that is unnecessary and at odds with our efforts as educators.

The issue of guns on campus is particularly important to sociologists because so many of the issues we discuss in the classroom – poverty, crime, race/ethnicity, the family, gender -- can arouse strong emotions and sometimes even conflict. Adding firearms to this mix could be dangerous and could discourage open discussion by students and faculty, the very heart of our enterprise.

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2. Ronald Angel – Professor
3. Javier Auyero – Professor
4. Ben Carrington – Associate Professor
5. Mounira Charrad – Associate Professor
6. Robert Crosnoe - Professor
7. Sheldon, Ekland-Olson – Professor
8. Daniel Fridman – Assistant Professor
9. Jennifer Glass – Professor
10. Mark Hayward – Professor
11. William Kelly – Professor
12. Ken-Hou Lin– Assistant Professor
13. David Pedulla – Assistant Professor

14. Joseph Potter – Professor
15. Daniel Powers – Professor
16. Leticia Marteleto – Associate Professor
17. Chandra Muller – Professor
18. Nestor Rodriguez – Professor
19. Sharmila Rudrappa – Associate Professor
20. Debra Umberson – Professor
21. Peter Ward - Professor
22. Mark Warr – Professor
23. Christine Williams – Professor
24. Michael Young – Associate Professor
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